

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

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PUBLIC MEETING

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MONDAY
APRIL 24th, 2017

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The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board met in the auditorium of Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, 1100 Harvard St. NW, Washington, D.C., at 6:43 p.m., Darren Woodruff, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT:

DARREN WOODRUFF, Chair
DON SOIFER, Vice-Chair
SCOTT PEARSON, Ex-Officio
RICARDA GANJAM
STEVE BUMBAUGH
RICK CRUZ
SABA BIREDA

ALSO PRESENT:

TERI QUINN, Equity and Fidelity Specialist
MIKAYLA LYTTON, Senior Manager, Finance and Strategy

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (9:20 p.m.)

3 MR. WOODRUFF: We will be voting on
4 both of these schools and a few others at our
5 May 22nd meeting. So, thank you. We take
6 this process very seriously, so we appreciate
7 everyone that came out to make their voices
8 heard.

9 I'm going to scan for any bio break
10 needs. We're good? Okay.

11 We're going to move right into our
12 actual public meeting, and we'll start by
13 approving the agenda.

14 Do we have a motion?

15 MR. SOIFER: I move to approve the
16 April 24th, 2017 Board meeting agenda. All
17 those -- oh, that's you.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MR. WOODRUFF: You can say it, if
20 you want. No?

21 Okay. And also, folks, you should
22 know that our colleague Sarah Mead couldn't be

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1 here this evening, but she is voting by proxy.
2 So, I will announce her vote as well.

3 I believe we have a motion to approve
4 the agenda. All in favor.

5 (Chorus of aye.)

6 Any opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 Sarah Mead also votes in favor.

9 The agenda is approved.

10 Moving on to the minutes --

11 MS. BIREDA: I move to approve the
12 March 20th, 2017 Board meeting minutes. I
13 move to approve the March 20th, 2017 Board
14 meeting minutes.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. We do have
16 a motion for approving the minutes. All in
17 favor?

18 (Chorus of aye.)

19 Any opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 And Ms. Mead also voted in favor of
22 approving the minutes.

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1 We're going to pick up steam, folks.
2 As most of you who are regular participants in
3 our meetings know, we have a Consent Calendar
4 where we read into the record our administrative
5 contracts from our charter schools over \$25,000.
6 In addition, we are voting to open for public
7 comment our English, what was our English
8 Language Learner Monitoring Policy and, if
9 approved, will be our English Learner Policy.
10 And we could treat these as separate motions.

11 Do we have a motion for the Consent
12 Calendar -- for the administrative contracts?
13 Excuse me.

14 MR. SOIFER: I move to read the
15 administrative contracts that are at \$25,000
16 into the record.

17 MR. WOODRUFF: Do we have a second?

18 MS. BIREDA: Second.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: All in favor?

20 (Chorus of aye.)

21 Any opposed?

22 (No response.)

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1 Sarah Mead also votes in favor.

2 Our second motion is regarding the
3 English Learning Monitoring Policy. Do we
4 have a motion?

5 MR. BUMBAUGH: I move to open for
6 public comment the English Learning Monitoring
7 Policy.

8 MR. CRUZ: Second.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: And I hear a second
10 to my right.

11 All in favor of opening for public
12 comment the English Learning Monitoring Policy
13 say aye.

14 (Chorus of aye.)

15 Any opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 Okay. I should note that we did
18 not get a vote from Ms. Mead on that. So, we
19 have a 6-to-nothing vote to open that for public
20 comment.

21 And now, moving on, Mrs. Terri Quinn
22 is approaching the dais. Thank you. We're

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1 going to hear about two charter amendments,
2 proposed amendments. And the first is DC
3 Prep.

4 Hello. Welcome.

5 Okay, we have one recusal on this, I
6 should note, and that is Barretta.

7 Okay, Terri?

8 MS. WHEATON: Sorry, Raymond
9 Wheaton from DC Prep.

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Welcome.

11 MS. QUINN: Hello again.

12 Our staff recommends that you vote to
13 fully approve the charter agreement amendment
14 request of DC Preparatory Academy Public Charter
15 School for three proposed amendments.

16 The first, an enrollment ceiling
17 increases of 846 students which raises its
18 current ceiling to 2,912 students by school year
19 2024-25.

20 The second, a two-part program
21 replication to open a new elementary campus by
22 school year 2018-19 and a middle school campus

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1 by school year 2020-21.

2 And the third, to relocate its
3 existing Anacostia elementary school to a new
4 permanent location at 1409 D Street, Southeast,
5 in Ward 8, beginning in 2017-18.

6 We have received one public comment
7 in opposition to these requests from a
8 stakeholder who wishes for the Board to wait to
9 vote on this proposal until after the Cross
10 Sector Task Force develops its framework for
11 analyzing the opening, closing, and location of
12 public schools in D.C.

13 Aside from access to a facility, the
14 school meets all other nine criteria of these
15 amendments. So, I suggest you discuss this
16 first before making your vote.

17 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. So, to be
18 clear, there are three different
19 proposals/requests built into this overall?

20 MS. QUINN: Right. That's
21 correct.

22 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay, and we'll go

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1 through each of those.

2 Mr. Wheaton, do you want to just give
3 us an overview of the rationale?

4 MR. WHEATON: No.

5 MR. WOODRUFF: No?

6 MR. WHEATON: I mean, I can.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: You don't have to.

8 MR. WHEATON: Okay. I think you
9 have it already.

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. So, can you
11 just, if you don't mind, Terri, can you walk us
12 through each of the three?

13 MS. QUINN: Sure. So, the first
14 request, as I mentioned, the enrollment ceiling
15 increase, the school is requesting -- well, let
16 me start with the new location. So, first
17 and foremost, the existing Anacostia Elementary
18 School for I believe the past two years has been
19 located -- two years -- has been located at a
20 temporary modular site. It took the school
21 some time to find a permanent location, which
22 they finally have. And as I mentioned, that

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1 new address is 1409 D Street. I believe it's
2 just a few blocks away from the existing
3 temporary site.

4 To date, we haven't received any
5 public comment in opposition. So, the school
6 is prepared to begin operating there as early as
7 this coming school year. And PCSB staff, at
8 least two weeks prior to opening will do -- we
9 have a pre-opening checklist. So, we will do
10 a site visit, go check the list accordingly, and
11 ensure that this school is, in fact, ready to
12 operate and open up for '17-18.

13 MR. WOODRUFF: And this existing
14 elementary school, Anacostia Elementary, if I am
15 correct, it is pre-K-3 through kindergarten
16 currently?

17 MS. WHEATON: Yes.

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. It's going
19 to grow to what, fourth grade?

20 MR. WHEATON: Third grade.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Third grade?

22 Okay. But, right now, it's pre-K, 3, 4, and,

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1 then, kindergarten?

2 MR. WHEATON: Yes.

3 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. QUINN: The second amendment is
5 the school's enrollment ceiling increase, which
6 I am going to reiterate once again. They are
7 requesting 846 additional students, and that's
8 primarily to accommodate the school's request.
9 So, they align with the school's request to open
10 a new elementary school and a new middle school.

11 The elementary school they are
12 proposing to open in school year '18-19, and the
13 middle school they are proposing to open in
14 school year '20-21.

15 The middle school will actually be
16 the sister school, if you will, to Anacostia
17 Elementary. So, essentially, those students
18 from Anacostia Elementary will feed into the
19 proposed Anacostia Middle School Campus in
20 school year '20-21.

21 The elementary school campus -- I
22 don't know -- do you want to speak a little bit

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1 about that.

2 MR. WHEATON: Sure. So, we do
3 not have a site right now for our elementary
4 school campus, but we are looking at a couple of
5 opportunities, including a Ward 8 post, and,
6 then, some other things in the area.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And the
8 third proposal? Or did you already cover
9 that?

10 MS. QUINN: Did I go over that?

11 MR. WHEATON: Yes, you did.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Oh, that was the
13 increase of 846?

14 MR. WHEATON: Yes.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Right?

16 MS. QUINN: Yes, the enrollment
17 ceiling increase and the two proposed new
18 campuses align, but that's the first and second
19 amendment. And then, the third was the
20 Anacostia Elementary new location. So, that's
21 all three.

22 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.

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1 I'm going to open it up to any
2 questions we might have from Board members.

3 MR. BUMBAUGH: Can you hear me?

4 MR. WOODRUFF: Yes.

5 MR. BUMBAUGH: I know you all get
6 asked this question every time you're in this
7 meeting, but I want you to talk a little bit
8 about the work you're doing around suspensions
9 in a city that already has relatively-high
10 suspension rates relative to the rest of the
11 country.

12 DC Prep had the dubious honor of
13 having the highest, the very highest suspension
14 rates. I know those rates have come down, but
15 we looked at them earlier today and they're,
16 still relative to other schools in D.C., they
17 quite high.

18 DC Prep is a CMO that has been around
19 for a while now. How is it that you still
20 rely on suspensions as a mechanism for managing
21 your school.

22 MR. WHEATON: Yes. So, as a

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1 former principal, I will say we don't rely on
2 suspension as the way that we manage our
3 schools, and we have various interventions that
4 we put in place, from small group intervention
5 that starts day one for every single student
6 that's in our building through even this last
7 year incorporating in school in-class suspension
8 for our elementary grades, which we didn't have
9 before.

10 And so, while we are always working
11 to figure out ways to best serve our kids, when
12 we look at our data again, the number of days
13 that the kids are missing out of school is
14 actually very small compared to the rest of the
15 city.

16 Then, we are always working with
17 other people, including the Public Charter
18 School Board, looking at things with the Stat
19 Co-op and other groups that figure out ways that
20 we can implement our program to a way that we
21 will keep the rigor that we want, keep the
22 standards and the structure that we want, but,

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1 then, also serve our kids, so they are in our
2 school building at all times.

3 MR. WOODRUFF: If I could, I would
4 like to dig a little bit more into the
5 suspension data.

6 MR. WHEATON: Sure.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: And I also realize
8 that you get this question probably every time
9 you're before this Board. But I will start by
10 acknowledging that each of these campuses that
11 are already in operation are strong performers,
12 Tier 1, very successful academically. So, I
13 definitely recognize that.

14 However, back to the suspension data,
15 and, in particular, the campus that you are
16 seeking to move to a new location, the existing
17 Anacostia Elementary, you noted a few minutes
18 ago that your current student body is pre-K-3
19 through kindergarten. And yet, our data shows
20 that this current school year the out-of-school
21 suspension rate is 6.9 percent now. This is
22 not even a fully-formed elementary school.

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1 The sector average is 3.7. So, you're already
2 approximately double that.

3 Are you guys suspending
4 kindergarteners?

5 MR. WHEATON: So that grade level
6 does, it is kindergarten to the highest grades,
7 so kindergarten will be one of those students
8 who are suspended. I don't want to claim that
9 I can speak to the specifics of Anacostia
10 Elementary not because, like, I'm not prepared
11 to speak to what's happening in the daily
12 operations. But what I can do is make sure
13 you get a summary of what's happening in that
14 school.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Well, the reason I'm
16 bringing that up is it's concerning, in and of
17 itself, that this school is in Ward A and we
18 just spent about two hours hearing about
19 disconnected students or disengaged students.
20 And if your rate of suspension is already twice
21 the sector average, I'm wondering what these
22 students have to look forward to when they get

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1 to middle school.

2 MR. WHEATON. So I'm going to
3 answer it in a different way because I think
4 what they have to look forward to is still the
5 quality of education that we're providing and
6 then also can speak to, what I can speak to is
7 the partnerships that we are working with in
8 terms of the wraparound services for our
9 students.

10 So I'm working with both far east and
11 far southeast. We're trying to make sure that
12 we have the services that we can have. This
13 past year, I spent my time working with the
14 Department of Behavioral Health and their
15 initiative to start a term of service clinical
16 support for our students. And then on top of
17 that, like I do recognize that the suspension
18 rate is high, and so that is also the way we do
19 our work is that, when we have data we look at,
20 what it is that we can do to diagnose and figure
21 out what we can do, as adults, to make strides
22 and make improvements in what we do.

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1 So I can't speak to the day-to-day
2 operations of that principal, but I can, I do
3 know that the DC Prep way is to look at the data
4 and try to work within it to try to make things
5 better.

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Right. And the
7 out-of-school suspension for that same campus
8 last school year, for 2015 - >16, was zero.
9 So according to our records --

10 MR. WHEATON: And that's because
11 preschool and pre-K.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Right.

13 MR. WHEATON: Right.

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Because you can't,
15 legally you can't suspend. And I should add,
16 and I'm sticking to this because it's very
17 concerning, the suspension rate for students
18 that have IEPs is 40 percent this current school
19 year. Can you explain that? I mean, you
20 just mentioned wraparound programs.

21 MR. WHEATON: So I do the work for
22 our wraparound programs for all our school and

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1 trying to search for ways that we can strengthen
2 our partnership. Again, I'm not going to
3 speak to the specifics of each of the five
4 principals because I think I would be doing them
5 a disservice, but what I can do, I believe that
6 we had a desk audit that we sent or we should be
7 sending a reply recently, we can send that to
8 the Board specifically.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Well, this
10 data for this current school year, and I'll just
11 do one more because --

12 MR. WHEATON: I believe that that
13 audit was from this past month.

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And it's
15 sort of the same trend. At the Edgewood
16 Middle campus, which I understand is your oldest
17 campus, the Edgewood campus, last year
18 suspension rate was 18 percent for the entire
19 year. Currently, this year, it is now 27.9,
20 which is almost ten points higher. And the
21 special ed students, it's 44.9. So these are
22 middle school students who, theoretically, have

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1 been in your program through elementary school,
2 so whatever you did in those earlier grades
3 doesn't seem to be, at least behaviorally,
4 having an impact.

5 MR. WHEATON: Well, I would say yes
6 and -- right. So I would say, yes, there are
7 things that we have done in our earlier grades
8 that actually does transfer. I also know
9 within our organization, I think we mentioned
10 this in our desk audit, that we have had some
11 leadership changes in those schools. And so,
12 like, this particular, that particular school,
13 not only did a new principal come on board but
14 that new principal also went on long-term leave.

15 And so, like, things happen. We
16 have leadership changes. I'm a prime example
17 of that. My first year, you were probably
18 asking Emily the same type of questions based
19 off of what happened in my first year at Benny
20 Elementary. So I think what we have seen and
21 what we do anticipate is that the schools,
22 especially this one at Edgewood Middle, that she

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1 is back and I do believe that some of the
2 righting of the ship in terms, like, how she
3 supports her school and how she supports her
4 adults that help do the work, we should see,
5 it=s not steady, something that is going to be
6 some lower decrease for the last couple of
7 months.

8 MR. WOODRUFF: Given, I mean, I=ll
9 get off of the data for now, but given that
10 these trends are, roughly, similar across all of
11 your campuses, all five of them, the current
12 ones, what I=m wondering is if we were to
13 approve your growth, your addition of another
14 elementary school and then I would imagine
15 subsequent growth to a middle school, is this a
16 pattern that is going to change or is this
17 something that you all see as integral to your
18 clearly successful academic outcomes?

19 MR. WHEATON: So I think the work
20 that we have been doing the last couple of years
21 and the steady decrease that you mentioned
22 earlier is a result of us purposely focusing on

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1 to making sure that --

2 MR. WOODRUFF: I did not mention a
3 steady decrease.

4 MR. WHEATON: Sorry?

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Go ahead. I'm
6 sorry.

7 MR. WHEATON: That our students are
8 getting the education that they deserve. What
9 we see is that there's something that is
10 happening in this school year which our
11 principals and our academic team is definitely
12 going to work to figure out what it is that we
13 need to do in our adult practice to help improve
14 what is happening in our day-to-day in terms of
15 working with students.

16 One of the things that I can point
17 to, and I can only point to my experience in
18 working with the charter and my experience in
19 working at DC Prep, is that when there is
20 something that we don't feel is right or we feel
21 is working well, we do work with our reflection
22 refinement to try to figure out, like, how can

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1 we shift what we are doing to serve kids better?

2 And so I'm not going to, like, the
3 numbers are the numbers and the increase is the
4 increase. But I do believe that we can look
5 at our campuses, especially Benny Elementary
6 campus or Anacostia campus or Edgewood
7 Elementary campuses. That is where that
8 continued decrease is happening because they
9 have, their staff have been together for a
10 longer time, and we want to make sure that we do
11 the same things not only at the other three
12 campuses but at the new campuses as we move on.

13 MS. BIREDA: I'm recused from this
14 vote, but I would like to understand I'd like
15 people to understand on the record what type of
16 discipline policies do you have in place that
17 would allow for kindergartners to be facing
18 out-of-school suspension. I just want to
19 understand what the policies are and then what
20 kind of reforms we could expect in an expansion
21 because you mentioned adult behavior needing to
22 change and it seems like the policy might, the

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1 fact that there are things which kindergartners
2 can be suspended for seems to me to be a place
3 to start.

4 MR. WHEATON: I think the thing
5 that I would do is actually speak with that
6 specific school leader and find out what were
7 the incidents that caused those students or
8 student to be suspended. Like, I cannot speak
9 directly to that because I just don=t know.

10 MS. BIREDA: Do you have a separate
11 policy for kindergarten?

12 MR. WHEATON: We have, so within
13 our code of character, we have bands, and don=t
14 quote me on the bands, I believe is K through 3,
15 something in that -- sorry. I think it=s like
16 K or preschool or K1 to 3 kind of bands, what
17 happens and what we=ll call, say, an
18 intervention, some kind of support in other
19 ways, and then also suspension.

20 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. Anyone
21 else have a comment or a question? What I=m
22 going to do is, I think we have three,

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1 basically, qualitatively different proposals on
2 the table. So if we could introduce them
3 separately and then have our motion made and
4 then have our vote, I think that=s the best way
5 to handle this.

6 So why don=t we start with the
7 relocation of the existing Anacostia Elementary
8 to the new permanent location? And that
9 location has already been identified; is that
10 correct? 1409 V Street?

11 MR. WHEATON: Yes, sir.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Do we have
13 a motion?

14 MR. SOIFER: Yes, I will move to
15 approve DC Preparatory Academy Charter School to
16 relocate to a new permanent location at 1409 V
17 Street, Southeast, beginning school year 2018 -
18 19.

19 MS. BIREDA: Seconded.

20 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. We have a
21 motion and a second to allow the existing
22 Anacostia Elementary to move to a permanent

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1 location. Is there any discussion?

2 MR. CRUZ: There=s an edit.

3 MR. SOIFER: Yes. My notes are
4 wrong. Beginning >17 - >18.

5 MS. QUINN: Anacostia Elementary
6 will locate to V Street, Southeast, in >17 -
7 >18.

8 MR. SOIFER: Right. Thank you.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. We
10 have a motion, and we have a second. All in
11 favor of the relocation say aye.

12 (Chorus of aye.)

13 MR. WOODRUFF: Any opposed? Sara
14 Mead did vote in the affirmative for that.
15 Okay. I want to make sure I get this right.

16 And next up, we have a two-part
17 program replication to open a new elementary
18 campus, elementary campus in school year 2018 -
19 >19 and a new middle school campus by school
20 year 2020. Do we have a motion?

21 MR. SOIFER: I move to approve DC
22 Preparatory Academy Public Charter School to

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1 replicate its program to open a new elementary
2 school in the >18 - >19 school year and a middle
3 school in the >20 - >21 school year.

4 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. We have a
5 motion. Before I ask for a second, I just do
6 want to make a comment. I am struggling
7 mightily to understand the logic behind
8 suspending out-of-school five-year-olds. I
9 know that you don't have a response to that, but
10 I've been in education now for over 30 years and
11 I can't come up with an explanation that makes
12 sense. So I recognize that this is one of our
13 high-performing operators, but I think this is
14 an issue that we've hinted at, talked about,
15 danced around, and we have not seen significant
16 improvement. And I would love to hear anyone
17 from your organization justify a 40-percent
18 suspension rate for five-year-olds who have
19 disabilities. So that's the reason why I'm
20 not going to vote for this expansion. I think
21 this is a high-performing school, but I think
22 you owe it to the public to explain why that

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1 happens. That=s my comment.

2 Okay. Do we have a second?

3 MR. CRUZ: Second.

4 MR. WOODRUFF: We have a motion to
5 approve the expansion to an elementary and
6 middle school, and we have a second. All in
7 favor?

8 (Chorus of aye.)

9 MR. WOODRUFF: I heard two ayes.
10 All opposed?

11 (Chorus of nay.)

12 MR. WOODRUFF: I heard three, and I
13 believe Sara Mead also is a vote for the
14 affirmative. So we have a three-three tie.
15 You are recused?

16 MS. BIREDA: I don=t know if I=m
17 recused from all parts. I don=t know if it=s
18 just the relocation or it=s everything.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Scott, can you help
20 us with that?

21 MS. BIREDA: I assume it=s the
22 whole thing.

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1 MR. PEARSON: I think it=s
2 specifically just the new location.

3 MS. BIREDA: Is it? Do you want
4 to re-vote?

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Are you able to vote
6 on this topic?

7 MS. BIREDA: I can vote on the
8 increase but not the location.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. We already
10 voted to approve the relocation, so we have
11 three votes in favor of the expansion to the
12 elementary and middle school and three against,
13 and your vote is?

14 MS. BIREDA: No.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: No. So it does
16 not pass, and this Board votes against. I
17 just want to make sure we=re clear on that.
18 We have four votes against and three votes for.
19 Okay.

20 Finally, we have an enrollment
21 ceiling increase of 846 students from the
22 current 2,056. That would add up to 2,912 by

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1 school year 2024. And that would not,
2 obviously, now not include the new schools, but
3 it would allow for eventual increase to the
4 enrollment.

5 Do we have a motion? Should I say
6 that again?

7 MR. SOIFER: Yes.

8 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And I'm
9 just reading straight from the memo. The
10 school requests an enrollment ceiling increase
11 of 846 students from the current ceiling of
12 2,056 to 2,912 students, and this increase would
13 start in the 2019 - 2020 school year and
14 continue through the 2024 - 2025 school year.
15 So it would be an increase of 846 students.
16 Do I got that correct?

17 Okay. Do we have a motion?

18 MR. SOIFER: I would move to
19 approve the enrollment ceiling increase as
20 stated.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

22 MR. CRUZ: Second.

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: We have a motion, we
2 have a second. All in favor?

3 (Chorus of aye.)

4 MR. WOODRUFF: I heard two ayes.
5 And we do have a third from Ms. Mead. All
6 opposed?

7 (Chorus of nay.)

8 MR. WOODRUFF: One, two, three,
9 four. That motion does not pass. So one
10 motion has passed, and that is the relocation of
11 Anacostia Elementary to a new permanent
12 location, and the address is still correct, 1409
13 V Street, Southeast, which is in Ward 8.
14 Okay, thank you.

15 And next up, we have -- I'm not sure
16 if anyone is here from KIPP, but if there is
17 you're welcome to come down. Come on down.

18 MS. COLE: Hi, everybody. I'm
19 Katie Cole. I'm general counsel for KIPP.
20 Happy to be here.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Thanks for coming
22 out.

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1 MS. COLE: Sure.

2 MS. QUINN: So PCSB staff
3 recommends that the Board approves KIPP DC=s
4 request for postponement of this amendment
5 request for an enrollment ceiling increase and
6 program replication. We held a public hearing
7 regarding this proposal on March 20th, 2017,
8 but, after consideration of feedback from PCSB
9 staff and the community on April 18th, 2017, the
10 school submitted a letter to PCSB requesting to
11 postpone the Board=s vote until a date that is
12 yet to be determined. A copy of this
13 postponement request is provided in your meeting
14 materials in case you care to discuss.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.
16 Did you want to add anything to that?

17 MS. COLE: I just wanted to say
18 that we have heard the feedback that we=ve
19 gotten from the community and we=ve heard the
20 feedback from PCSB, and we=re excited to
21 continue to discuss with you all your concerns
22 and the ways that we can best address all the

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1 feedback we've received and hopefully move
2 forward.

3 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you very much.
4 So what we are voting on this evening is on the
5 postponement --

6 MS. QUINN: Yes, that's correct.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: -- of the votes, if
8 I'm correct. Okay. Do we have a motion?

9 MS. BIREDA: I move to postpone the
10 vote on KIPP DC Public Charter Schools charter
11 agreement amendment request for an enrollment
12 ceiling program application and new location.

13 MR. WOODRUFF: Do we have a second?

14 MR. CRUZ: Second.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: We have a motion and
16 we have a second. All in favor?

17 (Chorus of aye.)

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Any opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. WOODRUFF: And Ms. Mead also
21 voted in the affirmative, so we will come up
22 with a date, right, and we'll take it from

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1 there. Thank you so much.

2 MS. COLE: Thank you.

3 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. Okay.

4 We have a few more items this evening. Ms.

5 Rashida Young, come on down. Are we starting

6 with Eagle? MS. YOUNG: Yes.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

8 MS. YOUNG: Good evening. I'm

9 going to let the school introduce themselves
10 first.

11 MR. SMITH: Joe Smith, the CEO of
12 Eagle Academy.

13 MS. HAMMON: Melissa Hammon, School
14 Compliance Officer.

15 MS. ALSTON: Karen Alston, head of
16 marketing.

17 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thanks for
18 coming out tonight. Rashida?

19 MS. YOUNG: Yes. Hello, I'm
20 Rashida Young, Senior Manager in the School

21 Performance Department. Our staff requests to

22 vote to issue a notice of concern to Eagle

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1 Academy Public Charter School, Congress Heights,
2 for passing the truancy threshold of our board=s
3 truancy policy. The school=s truancy rate as
4 of April 5th is 33.7 percent, and the charter
5 school=s sector average is 15.2 percent.

6 If the school can show improvement in
7 their students= attendance data, according to
8 the areas outlined in the policy, our staff
9 would recommend this notice to be lifted at the
10 June Board meeting. The school is here to
11 answer any questions you may have.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Joe, the floor is
13 yours.

14 MR. SMITH: Well, folks, this is
15 our 14th year. And in 13 previous years, we
16 have not had this problem, and it was a surprise
17 to me that we have it. In fact, we got the
18 notice, I didn=t even know about it until after
19 it was investigated and we had reported back to
20 the Public Charter School Board.

21 So it eventually came up to me, and
22 we did some looking at what we have. We have

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1 155 students who are reported having an
2 excessive number of, who are truant because they
3 have an excessive number of absences. So we
4 did some exploring to find out what=s going on.

5 We have 11 of those 155 students who
6 are experiencing homelessness, and that has
7 contributed to that number. Twenty-five of
8 these 155 students did not have their
9 immunizations up to date, and someone suspended
10 them until they got it up to date and that meant
11 some students were out for over -- yes, it=s not
12 very --

13 MR. WOODRUFF: That=s not good.

14 MR. SMITH: Everything is not
15 perfect here. I don=t like sitting here
16 telling you this, but I=m telling you what
17 happened. And so students got suspended or
18 were told they were not allowed -- I shouldn=t
19 say suspended.

20 MS. HAMMON: They received
21 exclusion letters from our school nurse. So
22 once they received those notifications, some of

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1 those students did not return for a certain
2 amount of days. A number of parents indicated
3 that there were some issues with their insurance
4 and things of that nature. So although it is
5 considered to be excused, we had families who
6 may have missed five days, but it was in regards
7 to their medical information not being up to
8 date but they were not able to provide written
9 documentation or a medical note because they
10 said there were outside issues that kind of
11 prevented them from being able to document it.

12 MR. SMITH: And to add the
13 confusion -- I know this sounds like a cartoon,
14 but it=s not. To add the confusion, our
15 attendance officer left, and we got a new
16 attendance officer November 1st. Because we
17 got her from another charter school, we thought
18 she was very familiar with all the ways that you
19 had to go about doing attendance. And it
20 turned out it was not quite true. It=s not
21 all her fault. I look at myself. I know we
22 brought her in. I knew she was new, but I

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1 just assumed she knew some of those things.

2 Now, we have another 55 of the 155
3 students who suffer from medical conditions.
4 These include severe asthma, sickle cell,
5 neurofibromatosis, hereditary spherocytosis, and
6 these absences should have been recorded as
7 excused, and they were not.

8 So we have a comedy of recording
9 errors, but it=s not very funny. We have a
10 number of errors that were made that we=ve gone
11 in to correct. The problem that we have now,
12 and I don=t quite understand the system fully,
13 but we cannot get in to correct errors that we
14 made in October, November, and December, and
15 January, so we=re going to look awful and
16 there=s nothing we can do about it.

17 We can do it in our system so that
18 our absences, we have 85 students who would no
19 longer have that ten or more absences. I
20 don=t know how to record that because we can=t
21 go back in. Did you want to --

22 MS. HAMMON: So the changes were

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1 made in Power School to reflect some of the
2 changes, but, for months where we had the lowest
3 recorded attendance, that data cannot be
4 changed. Our data manager, in the process of
5 accepting our monthly attendance rate, primarily
6 was she does do a comparison of our actual rate
7 to make sure what we have in our Power School
8 system actually matches what is being reported
9 according to OSSE and what is feeding through
10 SLED, not really evaluating unexcused absences
11 and individual student attendance.

12 Primarily, what we look at is
13 consecutive absences, as well as -- this is one
14 of the areas that we focus on. But
15 consecutive absences are a big issue and overall
16 in-seat attendance, but not specifically an
17 individual student=s attendance because some of
18 these students accumulated this overall total
19 over a period of time, not necessarily
20 consecutive absences or one specific time
21 period. So not being able to see those
22 changes and actually going back and looking at

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1 everything as a whole now, this problem is over
2 a time period and not one specific time period,
3 and we cannot change data that we pretty much
4 already accepted from a data standpoint, which
5 is certifying that the in-seat overall
6 attendance is correct and not really looking at
7 the individual.

8 MR. WOODRUFF: So I'm just going to
9 move to any remedies that you plan on
10 implementing to --

11 MS. HAMMON: Remedies --

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Solutions. How
13 we're going to solve this riddle.

14 MR. SMITH: Okay. You want to
15 move this quickly. Okay. I brought a nice
16 chart. Okay. Well, we can do it together.
17 First, we provided extensive training to our
18 current attendance officer. Next, and you
19 could jump in here with me, the SST team was
20 brought together and the Family Engagement
21 Coordinator and the school nurse, and some of
22 this problem, as you can see, generated from our

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1 school nurse. That can=t happen again, at
2 least I hope not, right?

3 MS. HAMMON: Right. So there=s
4 been measures put in place for effective
5 communication and references to students who
6 need to be excluded based on medical and
7 communication with the attendance officer and
8 our parent liaison so that they can better work
9 with the family and provide additional
10 assistance that can help them get through the
11 process without having so many excessive
12 unexcused absences.

13 MR. SMITH: And one of the things
14 is also review of attendance, which I have
15 already had. But the problem is I look at it
16 like this. Do you see what I mean? The
17 gross. I don=t look at individual children.
18 And so when I look at the gross, we dropped down
19 in November, December we hit pretty low, January
20 we started to come back up. That=s a pretty
21 typical pattern. We=re probably a point lower
22 than we normally are, but it=s a pretty typical

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1 pattern.

2 One month that we really got hit,
3 actually it=s two of them, but it was the end of
4 February and into March is when we had the two
5 murders right there. You know, one of our
6 parents was murdered right there across the
7 street and one right next to campus and an
8 additional five more murders within a couple of
9 blocks of where we were in the month of March.
10 And, consequently, our attendance -- that is a
11 real number, 87.9. I can=t, I can=t stop
12 that.

13 Parents are afraid. We have tried
14 to provide support. It took us two weeks to
15 get the police to give us a police presence, and
16 that=s why we started to get our attendance back
17 up.

18 As you know, we hosted the meeting
19 for violence in the community for all the
20 schools up there, and we are continuing to try
21 to work in that area. We=re also working much
22 more closely with CFSA on some of these issues,

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1 Child and Family Services. And we've also
2 created -- do you want to go into that one?
3 Because that's more you. The new form.

4 MS. HAMMON: So some of the issues
5 that we found is actually getting the
6 documentation from our parents, the supporting
7 documentation, and actually saying to write a
8 letter seems simple enough, but, for the
9 families that we serve, it has become somewhat
10 of an issue. We've had parents write excused
11 notes in the front office or write them on a
12 napkin.

13 So we developed a form to help them
14 really identify based on the OSSE identified
15 reasons for excused absences. So pretty much,
16 what they can do is just put their student's
17 name, they can check off the legitimate reasons,
18 sign and date it, and then just provide us with
19 any supporting documentation that they have.
20 And this kind of alleviates some of the issues
21 that the parents have when we say, hey, it's
22 just as simple as writing a note. And it

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1 seems simple enough, but it=s an issue for us
2 where we serve.

3 MR. SMITH: And the final thing is
4 actually the purchase of equipment.

5 MR. WOODRUFF: If you could just
6 make a -- go ahead.

7 MR. SMITH: I would just say
8 purchase of equipment. We=ve had a long line
9 where parents are coming in to, maybe they=re a
10 few minutes late. So we=ve gotten a second
11 piece of equipment that will help that go.
12 Sometimes, parents were just bypassing the
13 attendance officer going up to the teacher and
14 dropping the kid off in the room, and the
15 teacher thinks it=s fine. So we had our own
16 internal, we=ve straightened that out. That
17 is not happening anymore.

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And I=ll
19 just say we=re, you know, painfully, I think all
20 of us read that article over the weekend.
21 We=re painfully aware of the challenges that
22 your school and others schools, as well, are

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1 dealing with just trying to get students to come
2 in the building and be safe while they=re there.
3 So you definitely have our thoughts with you,
4 our concerns. And I would just say please
5 keep our staff informed as the progress with
6 this. And if there=s anything we can do to be
7 more supportive, we=re certainly going to do
8 that.

9 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you very much.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, thank
13 you.

MR. SOIFER: Can I ask a
14 question?

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Yes, you can.

16 MR. SOIFER: Real sorry to hear
17 about the two-week challenge with the police
18 presence to where you were hoping that it would
19 be. Could you speak to how that presence is
20 now compared to what you requested or what you
21 want to see?

22 MS. ALSTON: So one of the great

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1 results of that meeting we held for
2 Councilmember White outside of this Washington
3 Post article is now the commanders are talking
4 to us. You know, we=re engaged in
5 conversation. They put the camera across the
6 street that can sense the gunshots and where
7 they=re coming from, and we=re talking to police
8 about having more presence at our school.

9 To Joe and Melissa=s point about our
10 parents being fearful, we had broad daylight
11 shootings in the end of February and beginning
12 of March. So not only did we have to deal
13 with it with our parents, we also had to deal
14 with it with our staff. So this was a real
15 issue and, as you can see, a very difficult
16 issue.

17 So we realize, we understand, we know
18 the population we=re serving. And part of our
19 feedback to you is that we wish it were a
20 one-size-fits-all. But in our population, the
21 parents we serve, it=s not. So we=re making
22 the improvements we need to make. We=re

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1 communicating with not just our council leaders
2 but also the chief, with Diane Grooves. We're
3 talking to the commanders, and we are vocalizing
4 our needs so that our parents, our staff, and
5 our residents can feel safe.

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. So I'm just
7 going to call for a motion.

8 MS. BIREDA: I move to issue a
9 notice of concerns at Eagle Academy Public
10 Charter School - Congress Heights for passing
11 the truancy threshold according to DC PCSB's
12 truancy policy.

13 MR. WOODRUFF: Do we have a second?

14 MR. SOIFER: Second.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. We do have
16 a motion, and we have a second. All in favor,
17 say aye.

18 (Chorus of aye.)

19 MR. WOODRUFF: And Sara Mead also
20 voted in the affirmative. All opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. So we do

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1 have this notice, and we've certainly heard
2 everything you said and we'll look forward to
3 hearing about how the changes that you're making
4 are hopefully going to bear fruit.

5 MR. SMITH: We hope.

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Yes, so do we.
7 Thank you. Thanks for sticking around. All
8 right. Howard University.

9 MS. POKO: I'm Catherine Poko, and
10 I'm the head of the school at Howard University.
11 I've got my Special Education Coordinator, Ms.
12 Findley, my Assistant Principal, Mr. Houston, my
13 lady who answers the phone, Ms. Edmonds, and
14 which is why we're here today, and some other
15 key members are here.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: Welcome. Thank
17 you for coming out. We appreciate it.

18 MS. YOUNG: Hello. Our staff
19 requests that you vote to issue a Notice of
20 Concern to Howard University Middle School Math
21 and Science Public Charter School for failing
22 the mystery caller initiative of our Board's

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1 open enrollment policy.

2 When our staff called the school
3 posing as parents seeking to enroll a child in
4 the school, the school's staff, on two separate
5 occasions, stated that the school may not be
6 able to serve the child if he or she has certain
7 physical disabilities.

8 If you vote to issue the Notice of
9 Concern, our staff will make additional calls
10 over the next several weeks and if the school
11 staff's responses are appropriate, our staff
12 will recommend that you lift the notice at the
13 June Board Meeting.

14 And this will acknowledge, are there
15 any questions you have?

16 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And I trust
17 that you realize that legally you are not
18 allowed to ask those certain questions of
19 potential enrollees? Feel free to add to
20 that.

21 MS. POKO: So, first of all, we
22 enroll every student. It's interesting that

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1 this particular issue happened.

2 And it was Ms. Edmonds who answered
3 the phone. Because Ms. Edmonds' son is also
4 enrolled in our school.

5 Her son is an exceptional learner who
6 scores high on the autistic scale. So, it's
7 really interesting, because she if anybody knows
8 that we enroll every single student no matter
9 who they are.

10 I could ask her to talk about why she
11 said what she said. I could say that it was a
12 misstep.

13 We have students who have physical
14 ailments. We have a student who has one eye.
15 We have autistic students.

16 We had a situation last year where we
17 had a parent who was enrolling a sophiliar
18 (phonetic) autistic young lady who was going to
19 require a special room and a special chair, and
20 several other things that we didn't have in the
21 building.

22 And we started calling around campus

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1 to make sure that we could service this child.
2 Ms. Finley again, was working hard to put things
3 in place for this parent.

4 We told her fine. We don't have
5 this yet. But we're working on it. The mom
6 actually made a determination to enroll the
7 student in a PCPS autistic program, because she
8 felt we had an autistic program.

9 We have some autistic students. We
10 have all kinds of students. And we enroll
11 every student.

12 I could sit here and talk about Ms.
13 Edmonds to you. And Ms. Edmonds is some who
14 is going to help you regardless.

15 And sometimes I'm guilty of this
16 myself when I'm helping, the mouth runs off.
17 And you should stop. Okay. She can tell
18 you herself that we do not turn away anyone
19 ever.

20 I've been there two years. So this
21 is my second year. And the number of students
22 since I came who have -- who are exceptional

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1 learners, has increased tremendously.

2 There were two in the seventh grade
3 when I came. Three in the eighth grade. We
4 got 20 the year that I came.

5 Seventeen more in the sixth grade
6 this current year. I don't turn children
7 away. And it isn't what we do.

8 Was it the wrong thing to say on the
9 phone? One hundred percent right. But, I
10 think if you look at this, one of the things
11 that was said was that after they're accepted.

12 So, it wasn't no, we don't take them.
13 It was after they're accepted. So, I mean,
14 this is the documentation on how we make sure we
15 take care of every single child.

16 And this is not even half of what Ms.
17 Findley has. So again, we know -- we know the
18 law. And we follow the law.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And this is
20 precisely why we have this program. Is to
21 make sure that the level of service is where it
22 should be for all of our schools.

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1 So, any particular remedies or
2 tweaks? Or anything you intend to?

3 MS. POKO: Well, we have had a
4 training for all staff. We retrain them to
5 make sure that when speaking to parents that it
6 is extremely clear to them that they need to
7 follow the process for My School DC.

8 And our school is open to any child
9 who wants to come, as long as we have the
10 opening space.

11 MS. FINDLEY: Hi. We also have a
12 policy manual for special education, and
13 procedures. We have a Child Find process.
14 It's in the brochure.

15 Every person in our building has it.
16 Teachers, staff, we do training at the beginning
17 of the year. We do trainings all throughout
18 the year with staff.

19 We do our parent collaborations.
20 We tell them about the Child Find process.
21 And we go to extensive measures to work with our
22 staff and our parents in the communities to

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1 makes sure that we are really servicing our
2 learners and they are making progress.

3 That they're just not here, they're
4 making adequate progress. So, I as the SPED
5 person, I don't get involved in the enrollment
6 process. I get whatever comes in, that's what
7 we service.

8 So we do have documentation here,
9 where it has our manual, our Child Find brochure
10 that every -- it's a handy dandy tool. That
11 for every staff member to have in the building.

12 And for our parents, they get it at
13 our parent/teacher conferences. We have SPED
14 workshops with our parents that are outlining
15 all our processes.

16 We have things we email. We write
17 to them. We do a plethora of things.

18 MS. POKO: Ms. Findley is very
19 passionate about our exceptional learners.

20 MR. WOODRUFF: Sure, sure.

21 MS. POKO: We have to calm her
22 down.

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: We appreciate that.

2 MS. POKO: So I do have the front
3 office manual where we do explain what you are
4 supposed to say. And what you are not
5 supposed to say.

6 And our SPED manual is also at the
7 front desk in case anybody has additional
8 questions, every time anybody comes in. And
9 we service all students.

10 And did Ms. Edmonds misspeak.

11 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Don?

12 MR. SOIFER: Not to -- not to
13 belabor it. I'm sure we can talk collegially
14 about tweaks.

15 But, this Board's series of a program
16 of escalating notices is -- is a serious
17 consequence. And I'm very grateful for the
18 thoughtful explanation and approach.

19 What I'd really love to hear from you
20 before we move onto the motion is that as the
21 leadership of the school that you're confident
22 that this problem has been taken care of, and

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1 will not happen again.

2 MS. POKO: It will not happen
3 again.

4 MR. SOIFER: Thank you.

5 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. So,
6 with that said and understood, do we have a
7 motion?

8 MS. BIREDA: I move to issue a
9 Notice of Concern to Howard University Middle
10 School of Mathematics and Science Public Charter
11 School for providing inappropriate staff
12 responses on two occurrences for the mystery
13 caller initiative of DC PCSB open -- DC PCSB's
14 open enrollment policy.

15 MR. SOIFER: Second.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: Great. We have a
17 motion and a second. All in favor?

18 (Chorus of aye.)

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Any opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Sarah Mead also
22 voted in the affirmative. So we look forward

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1 to hearing about your progress.

2 And before you run off, how's the
3 school year going in general?

4 MS. POKO: Great.

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Fantastic.

6 MS. POKO: Really great.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: I know I owe you all
8 a visit.

9 MS. POKO: Yes, you do.

10 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll be there soon.

11 MS. POKO: Okay.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you
13 for hanging around. We appreciate it.

14 Okay. We are officially in the
15 home stretch. Is Washington Mathematics,
16 Science and Technology still here?

17 MS. YOUNG: No. They did not
18 plan to come.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Oh, okay. I see.
20 Yes. This is a simple one. Go right ahead,
21 Rashida.

22 MS. YOUNG: Okay. Our staff

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1 requests that you vote to lift the due process
2 Notice of Concern that was issued to Washington
3 Math, Science and Technology Public Charter High
4 School at the February Board meeting.

5 The school's board chair has provided
6 written assurance that the school will follow
7 its due process procedures with fidelity. And
8 the school has submitted accurate and on time
9 discipline data the past two months.

10 Per our staff's recommendation at the
11 February Board meeting, these were the two
12 actions the school needed to take to have the
13 Notice of Concern lifted.

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Very good.
15 Any comments or questions on this one?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Do we have
18 a motion?

19 MR. BUMBAUGH: I move to lift the
20 Notice of Concern. I move to lift the Notice
21 of Concern that was issued to Washington Math,
22 Science and Technology Public Charter School at

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1 our February 27, 2017 Board meeting for failure
2 to provide due process in an expulsion event.

3 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Do we
4 have a second?

5 MS. BIREDA: Second.

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Very good. We
7 have a motion and a second to lift the Notice of
8 Concern for WMST. All in favor?

9 (Chorus of ayes)

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Any opposed?

11 (No response)

12 MR. WOODRUFF: It's unanimous along
13 with Ms. Sarah Mead. Thank you.

14 And so we'll move right into Richard
15 Wright. Do we have anyone here?

16 I appreciate you all sticking around.
17 It's getting late.

18 MR. SOIFER: But we're almost back
19 on track.

20 MR. WOODRUFF: We actually are.
21 Ladies and gentlemen, we are on schedule.
22 Sort of.

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1 Okay. Mr. Clark?

2 MS. BIREDA: Impressive time catch
3 up.

4 MR. WOODRUFF: That is right.
5 That is right.

6 Dr. Clark?

7 DR. CLARK: Marco Clark from
8 Richard Wright.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: Welcome. Good to
10 see you.

11 MS. WITTEN: Going to use me again.
12 We'd like to request that you vote on two things
13 with respect to Richard Wright Public Charter
14 School.

15 The first is to cite the school for
16 an instance of fiscal mismanagement. And the
17 second is to approve the school's financial
18 corrective action plan.

19 Through December 2016 the school had
20 precariously low liquidity. It spent more
21 than one million dollars in reserves because it
22 did not cut expenses when revenue declined.

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1 In fact, expenses grew by 15 percent
2 when revenues fell by five percent. In
3 December 2016 the school made significant cuts
4 for expenses, including cutting salaries and
5 staff positions in response to an auditor's
6 concern that the school may not be financially
7 viable.

8 If they had not made those cuts, the
9 school would likely run out of funds to operate
10 in March 2017. These factors lead us to the
11 conclusion that the school engaged in an
12 instance of fiscal mismanagement.

13 As a result we worked with the school
14 to develop a financial corrective action plan
15 that focuses on improving liquidity in the
16 overall financial strength of the school.

17 Because of the extremely low cash
18 balances, the plan also requires the school to
19 secure a line of credit to ensure that
20 obligations can be met in a timely manner.

21 We'll continue to report to you on
22 the school's compliance with the plan's target

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1 through fiscal year 2019. Should the school
2 repeatedly miss its plan targets, the Board may
3 find that the school has engaged in a pattern of
4 fiscal mismanagement.

5 Should the school's finances further
6 weaken, the staff may recommend that the Board
7 vote to find Richard Wright Public Charter
8 School economically unviable. And thus
9 commence revocation proceedings.

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. So this
11 corrective action plan has already been
12 submitted?

13 MS. WITTEN: Yes. And it's
14 attached to the public board meeting materials.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.
16 Dr. Clark, do you want to add anything?

17 DR. CLARK: Yes. Well, good
18 evenings. Good evening.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Good evening.

20 DR. CLARK: I'd like to say that
21 part of this process from the beginning, is we
22 made a conservative effort to stabilize our

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1 school.

2 And knowing that this is the first
3 time we've ever had to come before the Board for
4 anything negative. I've never had a Notice of
5 Concern or anything of that nature.

6 And one of the things that we didn't
7 realize is that we used -- utilized our own
8 funds, the funds that we encumbered. These
9 were the dollars that we had in our reserves, to
10 stabilize our program.

11 Knowing that we receive kids that are
12 typically two to five grade levels behind, one
13 of the things we did was pour more of our
14 dollars into supporting them academically.

15 We didn't realize that we actually
16 went below the reserve tank that says that there
17 was an amount of money that we spent was
18 actually our reserves. We thought that using
19 our reserves to pour back into our program to
20 stabilize it, was a positive thing.

21 One of the things that took place is
22 that we stopped taking tenth grade. Because

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1 tenth graders were coming in extremely low, in
2 August, with five months to be responsible for
3 their Achievement Record.

4 And only knowing that we only had
5 five months to work with, we stopped taking
6 them. And in 2014, or 2015, we had the Navy
7 Yard shooting.

8 So, in addition too not taking tenth
9 grade, we lost some students because of the
10 safety issue from parents. And their concern
11 about what happened at the Navy Yard.

12 With that, we have a group of CPAs
13 that we have been working with since our
14 inception. And part of that is the first
15 several years we had a solid -- we were very
16 stable in our financial program.

17 We worked directly with the same
18 CPAs. The only thing that happened that was
19 different is that the person that actually
20 serviced our school changed.

21 And so the communication -- we found
22 out that there was a communication breakdown in

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1 the amount of -- in knowing that we could
2 utilize our reserves.

3 Which we thought we encumbered that
4 would work for our program to move our kids
5 forward academically and stabilize our program
6 as we got things rolled -- as we rolled out a
7 five-year program for grades eight through 12.

8 What I'd like to say also, is that we
9 were clear in the fact that we had a program
10 which we started making cuts in 2015 as we began
11 to roll back. To put those dollars back into
12 our reserves.

13 And so we had a handle prior to the
14 audit. That we knew that we had to make cuts.
15 And we were involved with that prior to even
16 meeting with the folks from PCSB, to say exactly
17 what we needed.

18 When we finally had our meeting, we
19 had already made the cuts that were necessary to
20 support this -- regaining this ability that was
21 necessary.

22 And so, while we do take ownership

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1 for the fact that that communication was --
2 happened. That there was a bad communication
3 there, this was strictly an idea to put dollars
4 into our program.

5 We have one of the highest facility
6 allotments that we wind up paying. We're
7 paying in the 20 percentile -- percent of our
8 revenue to ensure that we have a building for
9 our students.

10 And so, this was one of those things
11 that, you know, we expected the CPAs to do a
12 better response with it. And you know, the
13 oversight was there.

14 But we knew exactly what we were
15 doing to stabilize the program. To get it in
16 a place where the kids could move forward
17 academically.

18 We also recognized this. That we
19 felt that it was easier to rectify with the
20 funds to -- then it is to fix a kid in five
21 months.

22 And so those dollars needed to go.

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1 When over 94 percent of our kids come from Ward
2 Seven and Eight, they've been educated in some
3 of the worst programs in the District.

4 And the fact that we have 85 percent
5 of our kids considered at risk. And 100
6 percent of them are free and reduced lunch kids
7 that we serve consistently.

8 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Saba?

9 MS. BIREDA: I'd like you to
10 clarify the decision not to take tenth and
11 eleventh graders. And that you keep saying
12 the five-month piece, which I'm going to take to
13 mean, until they are being tested? Is that --

14 DR. CLARK: Can you repeat that?

15 MS. BIREDA: Your decision to not
16 take tenth and eleventh graders. So
17 specifically because you -- you referenced the
18 five-month piece to work with them.

19 DR. CLARK: So, we decided not to
20 take tenth grade because of the testing
21 scenario. That we would -- we were a school
22 that was taking kids in the middle of the year

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1 before. To support and -- to support the
2 progress and to try to move things forward.

3 But having a kid in August, that's a
4 brand-new student to our program, and in
5 August/September, and then being responsible for
6 their Academic Achievement in April, does not
7 give us a fair assessment of what we've been
8 able to do in a short amount of time.

9 MS. BIREDA: So you no longer take
10 tenth or eleventh?

11 DR. CLARK: We no longer take tenth
12 grade. But we have -- we are taking eleventh
13 grade students moving forward. In order to
14 make sure that that does not happen.

15 MS. BIREDA: Okay.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: Do you have a sense
17 of your expected enrollment given that decision
18 and structure?

19 DR. CLARK: We do. We --
20 according to My School DC and all of the numbers
21 that we've looked at, we have potentially 379
22 kids that should be on roll. Which is

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1 definitely up from the 300 that we have
2 currently.

3 And so we're looking forward to a
4 great -- our numbers have started back rising
5 last year. And as we begin to take eleventh
6 graders, into the program.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: And is that sort of
8 -- will that number allow you to hit the number,
9 the target number of enrollment that you need to
10 remain viable?

11 DR. CLARK: Yes. The target
12 number is for the entire space that we have.
13 It will only allow us to have 325 students.

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

15 DR. CLARK: Which will provide the
16 waiting list. And the space of the facility
17 has been a challenge with being able to increase
18 the number of kids in certain grades.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And you
20 mentioned the expense related to the facility.
21 Is there any solution on the horizon for that?
22 Or are you considering other spaces?

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1 DR. CLARK: Well, we've been
2 actively looking for other spaces to support our
3 program. All over the building we've work
4 with many different facility partners to try to
5 find a space.

6 And currently we're doing the same
7 thing to try to find a space that would be
8 suitable for our particular -- our kids.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

10 DR. CLARK: To get back and forth
11 with transportation. As well as continue to
12 help our program to flourish.

13 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. Oh,
14 Ricarda?

15 MS. GANJAM: You mentioned some of
16 your cost cutting measures this year included
17 letting some staff go. What impact is that
18 having on your daily operations?

19 DR. CLARK: It has no impact. We
20 -- what we did was, we did a salary reduction of
21 all non-teaching admin staff. In order to
22 make sure that that -- no impact would ever

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1 happen towards the kids.

2 And some of the other staffing models
3 that we had is just as we rolled out a five-year
4 program, which is a lot of harder than a nine
5 through 12, because you have five grades.

6 And part of what we had to do in
7 stabilizing the program is that you have more
8 teachers than you, you know, more staff than you
9 needed as you continued to roll out programs.

10 And then you were able to go back and
11 say okay, this person, we've now got to a
12 particular point that we don't need any more
13 staff in this area.

14 And now we have staff that's
15 sufficient for every grade. And we can
16 increase the number of students without
17 increasing staff.

18 MS. GANJAM: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Very good.

20 Any other questions? Dr. Clark?

21 DR. CLARK: May -- oh, go ahead.

22 MS. BIREDA: I just wanted -- oh,

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1 I'm sorry. Thanks. Are there members of
2 your Board here? Yes.

3 Could -- I'd just like to give you
4 the opportunity to speak to what happened.
5 And the Board's posture moving forward.

6 And the likelihood that it could
7 happen again. Or the level of engagement that
8 the Board has on fiscal management questions.

9 And any interaction that you may have
10 had with your accounting team or your
11 professionals responsible for supporting the
12 school's financial needs.

13 We'll just give you the chance to
14 comment on it.

15 MR. ROSS: Should I come up there?
16 Or can I do it from back here?

17 (Laughter)

18 MR. WOODRUFF: We're recording
19 this. So, if you don't mind.

20 MR. ROSS: Good evening everyone.
21 My name is Durwin Ross. I'm the Vice Chair of
22 the Board.

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1 And you know, we firmly support the
2 initiatives and the different plans that Dr.
3 Clark has put in place to correct everything
4 that needs to be corrected. And I think
5 moving forward we have a very optimistic look on
6 how things are going to shape up.

7 And you know, the Board is very
8 active in this whole process. And you know,
9 we take pride in making sure that, you know, T's
10 are crossed and I's are dotted.

11 And we're going to make sure that
12 that stays in place. And you know, all the
13 efforts that are being put forth to make sure
14 that these students and this population that we
15 deal with, have the resources that they need.

16 It's very important to us. And
17 it's something that we will continue to do.
18 And that's why, you know, putting that -- those
19 funds towards building this program, is very
20 important to us.

21 And we have a contingency plan to
22 make sure that everything is correct in moving

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1 down the road.

2 MR. SOIFER: Great. Thank you.

3 MR. ROSS: All right.

4 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Well, if
5 there are no other questions or comments, we
6 will entertain a motion.

7 Do you want to make another
8 statement?

9 DR. CLARK: Yes. I would like to
10 ask the Board, we are -- I love working with
11 Mckayla. And I think, you know, we definitely
12 own up to, you know, what happened.

13 And the fact of, I think, having a
14 corrective action plan is something that we are
15 clear about. We had a -- some conversations.
16 We've had a lot of conversations around this
17 particular item.

18 But I do ask that -- I do ask that
19 this Board consider having us on a corrective --
20 and working with a corrective action plan.
21 But take into consideration to think about not
22 having that citation.

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1 I just ask that question. And the
2 reason I ask that is, I think this is one of
3 those things that I think we have worked
4 diligently. And like I said again, to work to
5 be in compliance and with every situation.

6 And I do understand the concern that
7 was there. And how we got to this particular
8 point. And we do accept responsibility.

9 I just ask that if that would be a
10 consideration.

11 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.
12 Do we have a motion?

13 MR. CRUZ: I move. Are we doing
14 these separately? Or -- I -- because they're
15 --

16 MR. WOODRUFF: No. I think we
17 already voted on --

18 MR. CRUZ: No. There's a
19 financial corrective action plan and a citation.

20 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Do you want
21 to move that we do those separately?

22 MR. CRUZ: I don't know. I --

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1 whatever is best. Okay.

2 MR. WOODRUFF: I think we can do
3 them both together.

4 MR. CRUZ: And I'll just say before
5 doing this. I appreciate your entreaty to us.

6 But, as someone who chairs the
7 finance committee as the treasurer, I think for
8 the sake of consistency and to recognize the
9 seriousness of the challenge before you, and
10 that you've been dealing with across the last
11 year, I'm going to move to cite Richard Wright
12 Public Charter School for Journalism and the
13 Media Arts for an incident of fiscal
14 mismanagement.

15 And I also move to approve the
16 financial corrective action plan for this
17 school.

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. So we have
19 a motion for the citation for fiscal
20 mismanagement as well as a motion for approving
21 the corrective action plan that's already been
22 developed. Do we have a second?

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1 MR. SOIFER: Second.

2 MR. WOODRUFF: We have a motion and
3 a second. All in favor?

4 (Chorus of ayes)

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Any opposed?

6 (No response)

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Sarah Mead
8 also votes in the affirmative. So we
9 absolutely support you. And we look forward
10 to hearing about your progress.

11 DR. CLARK: No problem.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay.

13 DR. CLARK: We'll never be sitting
14 like this again. Trust me.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir.
16 That's what this is designed to do. To get
17 folks attention.

18 DR. CLARK: Absolutely.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. And thank
20 you very much.

21 DR. CLARK: Thank you.

22 MR. WOODRUFF: And we are -- I just

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1 want to gloat on my time management skills.
2 It's 10:26.

3 We do offer the public, such as it
4 is, to have any comment it would like to make at
5 this point in the meeting. I'm looking
6 towards the rear back there.

7 Does anyone want to come up and make
8 a public comment?

9 (No response)

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Seeing none, do we
11 have a motion to adjourn?

12 MR. SOIFER: So moved.

13 MR. WOODRUFF: We have a motion.
14 Do we have a second?

15 MS. BIREDA: Second.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: All in favor?

17 (Chorus of ayes)

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Any opposed?

19 (No response)

20 MR. WOODRUFF: We are adjourned.

21 And I would like to note for the record, on May
22 1, next week, we will have a public hearing for

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1 the remaining four charter applications.

2 And point two, we will be having a
3 special Board meeting to vote on the proposed
4 charter revocation for LAYC Career Academy on
5 May 9. Which will be at 4:30 at our board
6 offices.

7 And the next regular scheduled board
8 meeting is May 22. We are adjourned. Thank
9 you everyone.

10 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
11 went off the record at 10:27 p.m.)

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